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MOSCOW, JAN 19, REUTER - A U.S. EMBASSY WARNING ABOUT POTENTIALLY HARMFUL AMOUNTS OF CYANIDE AND MERCURY IN MOSCOW TAP WATER TODAY PROVED TO BE ALL A BIG MISTAKE.

EMBASSY SOURCES SAID SCIENTISTS AUTHORIZED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD NOW DECIDED THE TWO TOXIC SUBSTANCES PROBABLY CAME FROM BOTTLES USED TO COLLECT THE WATER SAMPLES -- NOT THE WATER ITSELF.

"THE EXPLANATION IS THAT THE CONTAMINANTS WERE ALREADY IN THE BOTTLES. HOW IS A HOOT QUESTION," THEY SAID.

THE EMBASSY SAID FOUR DAYS AGO THAT THE TRACES OF CYANIDE AND MERCURY WERE FOUND IN THE WATER SUPPLY OF TWO APARTMENT COMPOUNDS HOUSING U.S. DIPLOMATS AND OTHER FOREIGNERS.

THE SEVEN AMERICAN FAMILIES IN THE TWO BUILDINGS WERE ADVISED IN AN EMBASSY CIRCULAR NOT TO DRINK THE WATER.

THE EMBASSY SOURCES SAID THE TESTS WERE CONDUCTED IN AUGUST LAST YEAR BY AN AMERICAN MEDICAL TECHNICIAN USING SAMPLE BOTTLES SUPPLIED THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT.

A SECOND SET OF SPECIMENS WERE TAKEN ON JANUARY 7 AND SENT TO THE U.S. FOR LABORATORY TESTS; THEY SAID.

NO TRACE OF EITHER CONTAMINANT HAS FOUND.¹
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